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Responsible for Youth

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FIRST REGIONAL CONFERENCE OF YOUTH MINISTERS OF THE PACIFIC COMMUNITY, HELD IN FRENCH POLYNESIA ON 30 JUNE AND 1 JULY 1998

Note by the Conference secretariat

The Conference secretariat has the honour to circulate to Conference participants, as received and in the language of submission only, the attached Communiqué on Pacific Youth, adopted at the First Regional Conference of Youth Ministers of the Pacitic Community, held in French Polynesia on 30 June and 1 July 1998.

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Communiqué on Pacific Youth

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PACIFIC YOUTH MINISTERS ADOPT THE PACIFIC YOUTH STRATEGY 2005

The First Regional Conference of Youth Ministers of the Pacific Community at its meeting held in French Polynesia from 30th June to 1st July 1998 adopted the **Pacific Youth Strategy 2005** (PYS 2005) as a strategy framework for addressing the increasing youth challenges in the Pacific region into the next century.

The PYS 2005 was commended to the Youth Ministers Meeting by the 4th Regional Conference on Pacific Youth which met from 24th – 27th June. PYS 2005 portrays six programmes as forming the platform for youth activities in the region toward the year 2005 and beyond.
These programmes are :

1. **Pacifika Aspirations** which focuses on full participation of young people in development.

2. **Challenge Pacifika** which calls for urgent action to implement positive practical responses to emerging issues including education, employment, youth health, environment, juvenile delinquency and promotion of peace.

3. **Youth-Lead Pacifika** which focuses on skills development and capacity-building through appropriate training.

4. **Pacifika Advocacy** which highlights the important role played by the private sector, churches, NGOs, and youth organisations in youth development.

5. **Infoshare Pacifika** which focuses on collection, compilation and dissemination of information on youth development.

6. **Pacifika Empowerment** which focuses on assistance, to the 12 SPC Small Island States, and support entrepreneurial initiatives from young people in all member countries and territories.

In adopting the PYS 2005, Youth Ministers, and senior government officials from SPC's member countries and territories and representatives from NGO's, regional and international agencies, acknowledge the need for a more broad-based and integrated approach to address youth challenges at both the national and regional level.

The PYS 2005 provides this broad-based approach and is comprehensive yet flexible enough to be responsive to emerging issues in the region.

The Ministers agreed to commend this strategy to their respective governments and administrations and to advocate for resources to facilitate the implementation of the Strategy, as well as promoting it at the World Conference of Youth Ministers in Lisbon, Portugal and other appropriate regional and international fora.

RESOLUTION ON PACIFIC YOUTH
BY
THE 1ST CONFERENCE OF YOUTH MINISTERS OF THE PACIFIC COMMUNITY

The First Regional Conference of Pacific Youth Ministers for Pacific Youth convened in Papeete, from 30th June to 1st July 1998:

Recognising that young people are a *valuable* resource within our respective countries and territories,

Taking into account *the challenges* facing the young people of the Pacific today,

Being aware of the *limitations* of current approaches and existing programmes and opportunities available for the development of youth in the Pacific region,

Noting especially the high youth population and the consequent population implications ; and the *escalating* problems faced by young people of our respective countries and territories as:

- inadequate education opportunities
- lack of employment opportunities
- sexual, reproductive health problems
- mental health problems and suicide
- physical, emotional and sexual abuse
- crime and juvenile delinquency
- drugs and substance abuse (including alcohol and cigarettes)
- individual, family, cultural and religious conflicts
- lack of self-esteem
- changing lifestyle

Being mindful of efforts made by individual countries and territories, non-government organisations, churches, and regional, international and donors agencies,

Recognising that different countries and territories may require *different approaches* to respond to youth challenges,

And having considered the resolution of the fourth Regional Conference for Pacific Youth provided to this Conference addressing youth concerns in the region into the twenty first century:

Accepted the need for *concerted collective action* amongst youth organisations, churches, non-government organisations, governments, administrations, regional and international organisations, and donors to work together to more holistically address the problems and challenges affecting young people in the Pacific,

Have a vision of a *dynamic* and *vibrant* region that involves young people within overall national development,

Agreed to realise this vision, through:
- country specific activities
- regional initiatives
- political commitment
- donor support

Further agreed that maximum benefits for Pacific Island countries and territories can only be achieved through:

- continuous political commitment toward adequate allocation of resources for planning and implementing activities at all levels,
- collaboration by all stakeholders with an interest in youth qt national and regional levels,
- effective partnerships between development agencies and national and regional authorities.

And further agreed that programmes focus on:

- involving young people in decision making, planning and implementation of activities,
- developing and implementing youth policies and strategies,
- improving leadership, management and organisational capacities,
- developing and strengthening networks and information s,ystems, e.g. homepage for youth
- encouraging youth and community development activities,
- fostering a positive mental attitude approach.
- reduction and elimination of abuse of any kind on children and young prop'e

Hereby endorse and adopt *the Pacific Youth Strategy 2005 and commend it as the strategic framework for youth development in the Pacific region towards the year 2005 and beyond.* This Strategy portrays the following six programmes as forming the Platform for youth activities into the next century.

I. PROGRAMME I: PACIFIKA ASPIRATIONS

The **PACIFIKA ASPIRATIONS** programme focuses on promoting the full participation of young people in the economic, social, spiritual, and cultural development of society and recognising their unique contributions to the development of society.

The two key components of **PACIFIKA ASPIRATIONS** are:

1) development of **gender-inclusive national youth policies;**

2) establishment of the **Pacific Youth Awards for Excellence,** to recognise outstanding contributions young people have made to their respective societies. The awards will be at national and regional levels.

I. PROGRAMME II: CHALLENGE PACIFIKA

CHALLENGE PACIFIKA is a call for urgent action in implementing positive and practical responses to emerging issues including:

(i) Education

The Pacific region has made significant progress for several decades in extending basic education and literacy to most sections of societies. However, progress has been slower than anticipated in some island countries.

Intervention Strategy

1. ***Advocate for the introduction into the school curricula, more subjects involving the***

Development of skills needed for economic growth.

2. *Promote education for responsible family life as an integral and inalienable part of the formal and informal education programme for young people in order to enable them to learn survival skills in a rapidly changing society and ensure a smooth transition from the dependence of childhood to the independence of adulthood.*

3. *Promote the use of ' accelerative' learning techniques in schools and through special teacher education.*

4. *Develop specific programmes for young people with special educational needs.*

5. *Develop parental education programmes focussed on harnessing parenting skills, to enable families to cope with changing lifestyles.*

(ii) Employment

The Suva Declaration calls for the development of youth employment and training programmes that will enable the young people to participate more fully and meaningfully in both the subsistence and cash economies.

Intervention Strategy

1. *Develop more youth employment and training schemes for young people including those without employable skills that will enable them to participate more fully and meaningfully in both the subsistence and cash economies.*

2. *Involve young people in the development of self-employment initiatives and provide adequate resources to facilitate the implementation of these initiatives teaching them technical, commercial, servicing, and entrepreneurial skills.*

3. *Create structural solutions to foster enabling conditions to promote the participation of young people in the development of the economy.*

(iii) Youth health

There is a major concern with the areas of **sexual health (STD's, teenage pregnancies, sexual abuse), mental health, physical abuse, suicide, abuse of alcohol/tobacco/drugs/etc.**

Intervention Strategy

1. *Strengthen health education and promotional programmes aimed at addressing the above-mentioned health issues at regional and national levels and involve young people in the planning, development and implementation of these programmes.*

2. *Conduct peer education training programmes for young people on understanding sexual behaviour in adolescents; strategies for controlling alcohol and cigarette consumption; prevention of drugs and physical abuse; and coping with anxiety and depression; which will encourage young people to take responsibility for their own health.*

3. *Develop and strengthen appropriate 'youth friendly' health services, sensitive to the health needs of young people in member countries and territories.*

4. *Undertake concrete action which strengthen collaboration across sectors.*

(iv) Environment

There are urgent concerns for the environment and Governments and youth organisations need to promote the concept of sustainable development, in particular though extended efforts in environmental education.

Intervention Strategy

1. *Widen environment education initiatives to teach young people the concept of sustainable development and increase their understanding of environment management so they can make positive contributions to the protection and improvement of their environment.*

2. *Conduct ongoing practical programmes such as clean-up campaigns, tree planting, recycling projects, etc to provide young people with real opportunities to contribute positively to addressing environment issues and concerns.*

(v) Juvenile delinquency

Adolescence is a vulnerable time when antisocial behaviour and some degree of rebellion may surface for a number of different reasons. This can be expected for many adolescents and it applies even in the most integrated and well functioning families.

Intervention Strategy

1. *Introduce practically based solutions to ensure that the young people have a life that is full of purposeful and achievement-oriented programmes that have a realistic and practical basis.*

2. *Provide the widest range of civic, cultural, and recreational activities for young people which promote the development of a healthy self-esteem and a sense of community spirit which include training programmes for young people on problem solving and setting goals, effective communication, boosting creativity.*

3. *Conduct specialist counselling training for youth workers to enable them to provide guidance to at-risk young people and also to facilitate the*

rehabilitation of young offenders and providing them with the necessary chances for reintegration into society.

4. *Conduct more training programmes to assist young people promote and uphold the values of a responsible family life and check the influence of conflicting values which frequently comes with development and modernisation.*

(vi) Promotion of peace

Young people need to be educated in developing and maintaining a culture of peace in the Pacific region. They must serve as peer educators in fostering an atmosphere of compassion, tolerance, and mutual concern and trust.

Intervention Strategy

1. *Organise a regional level Train-the-Trainers programme in collaboration with the Pacific Women's Resource Bureau on how to create and maintain conditions for sustainable peace in the family, the community and society at large.*

2. *Advocate for the inclusion of peace education and conflict resolution skills development and self-control in the curricula of formal and non-formal educational institutions.*

II. PROGRAMME III: YOUTH-LEAD PACIFIKA

In the Pacific region, there are enormous unmet training needs of youth leaders.

Youth-Lead Pacifika focuses on capacity building and skills development to ensure youth leaders and youth organisations can contribute positively toward national development.

Intervention Strategy

1. *design and conduct in-country training programmes for youth leaders in areas such as leadership; management and administration; policy development; organisational behaviour and development; team work, project planning, management and evaluation; self-motivation; personal development and efficiency programmes; managing change; problem solving; effective communication; negotiation; interpersonal skills; etc.*

2. *Design and conduct periodical specialist Train-the-Trainers courses in the above topic areas in order to build up a cadre of trainers in the region..*

3. *Promote the introduction of special educational programmes focussing on skills development to accommodate young people dropping out of the formal education system.*

4. *Promote the concept of exchange programmes or study tours/attachments within the region and beyond to provide youth leaders and*

young people with the opportunity to exchange experiences and learn from each other.

5. *Introduce a regional educational pilot project along the lines of a 'Citizenship Development Programme' for young people with a focus on promoting the spirit of nationalism (national pride), and patriotism (sense of identity). The programme can be in two areas: 1) introducing the concept into the school system (social studies) and 2) conducting special programmes through NGO's for young people. It is also necessary to include the concept in the 'teacher training' courses in member countries.*

III. PROGRAMME IV: PACIFIKA ADVOCACY

PACIFIKA ADVOCACY recognises the important and positive contributions to the development of society made by the private sector, non-governmental organisations which are active within the countries and territories of the region.

This programme will focus on strengthening relationships and promote collaborative activities with the private sector and youth organisations including the Pacific Youth Council; and non-government organisations, churches, regional and international agencies.

IV. PROGRAMME V: INFOSHARE PACIFIKA

INFOSHARE PACIFIKA focuses on regular collection, compilation and dissemination of information on youth development in the region and globally through:

- ongoing promotion of the Pacific Youth Strategy 2005
- continued production of Youthlink newsletter
- Pacific Youth Information Network (PYIN)
- Linking Youth Homepage with PIDP and other organisations

V. PROGRAMME VI: PACIFIKA EMPOWERMENT

(i) *The 'Small Island States Fund'*

The Secretariat of the Pacific Community has established the Small Island States Fund which is managed by the Youth Development Adviser. The Fund provides technical assistance, training and other services as required by the SPC's small island members. The Fund became operational in 1998 and Island members, traditional and non-traditional donors are invited to contribute to the corpus of the Fund on a continuing basis to ensure it's sustainability.

The 12 member states and territories to be given access to the Fund include: **Pitcairn Island, Tokelau, Niue, Tuvalu, Wallis and Futuna, Cook Islands, Nauru, Palau, Marshall Islands, Kir bati, American Samoa, Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas.**

An area of priority expressed by small island members is with skills training of young people. In this context, "skills" are envisaged in a very broad way-fishing, boats, gardening, sports, arts/crafts, trades, small business, bookkeeping and so on. This is training designed to give underemployed young people a place in the community. This will guarantee that the Small Island States Fund is being focussed on an area of need for young people.

(ii) ***Promote and support youth entrepreneurial initiatives***

In the Pacific, there are many examples of successful youth initiated businesses. This programme is aimed at promoting self-employment initiatives for young people as an alternative means of employment by developing their entrepreneurial skills, thereby increasing their ability to participate in economic activities.

And noting that agreement was reached between all regional, international non-government and donors agencies represented at the Conference that they will collaborate more closely with each other and work together to assist youth development in the region. The organisations represented being Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC), UNFPA, UNESCO, UNICEF, Sasakawa Peace Foundation - Sasakawa Pacific Islands Nations Funds (SPINF), Commonwealth Youth Programme (CYP), ESCAP, World Assembly of Youth (WAY), United States Peace Corps, PIDP, PYC, and other similar stakeholders.

Agreed that the Pacific Youth Resource Bureau of the Secretariat of the Pacific Community:

- serve as the focal point for Youth Advocacy and the coordination, implementation, monitoring and review of the PYS2005
- maintain strong collaboration with all other regional and international agencies who have interest in youth development during its implementation and,
- facilitate integration of youth concerns in all sectoral programmes of the SPC,

We undertake to commend this strategy to our governments as a framework for addressing youth development challenges in our respective countries and territories, and to advocate for resources to enable implementation of the strategy at country and regional level.

And hereby call upon communities, churches, NGOs, governments, donors, regional and international agencies to make a concerted effort towards the implementation of this Strategy.